

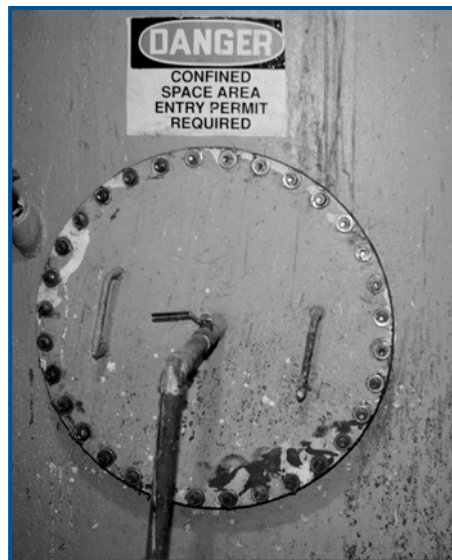


Practices and Procedures to Protect Employees

The permit-required confined spaces regulations establish minimum requirements for the practices and procedures to protect employees from the hazards associated with entry into permit-required confined spaces (PRCS). These rules do not apply to agriculture, construction, and shipyard employment.

A confined space is defined by the following criteria:

- It is large enough and so configured that an employee can bodily enter and perform assigned work.
- It has limited or restricted means for entry or exit (e.g., tanks, vessels, silos, storage bins, hoppers, vaults, pits, etc.).
- It is not designed for continuous human occupancy.



A PRCS has one or more of the following characteristics:

- It contains or has a potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere.
- It contains a material that has the potential for engulfing the entrant (e.g., liquids, grain, sand, coal, etc.).
- It has an internal configuration such that an entrant could be trapped or asphyxiated by inwardly converging walls or a floor that slopes downward and tapers to a smaller cross-section.
- It contains any other recognized serious safety or health hazard.

The applicable regulation is Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1910.146.

The regulations require the employer to:

- Evaluate the workplace to determine if it contains any PRCS.
- If PRCSs are found, the employer must inform employees of the existence, location, and danger posed by these spaces by placing “Danger—Confined Space” stickers at these locations.
- If employees are not to enter PRCSs, the employer must take steps to prevent entry (e.g., postings, locks, etc.).
- If employees will enter PRCSs, the employer must develop and implement a written permit space entry program that complies with the standard. Persons acting as entrants, attendants, and entry supervisors must be trained according to the standard.

Permit-Required Confined Spaces

Entry into PRCs may be undertaken by following complete permit entry program or alternate entry procedures. If atmospheric, engulfment, and/or mechanical hazards in the PRCs cannot be eliminated and/or controlled prior to entry, a complete permit entry program must be followed. Refer to the standard for a complete description of a permit entry program. If the only hazard in the space is an actual or potential atmospheric hazard that can be controlled through continuous forced air ventilation, the alternate entry procedures can be used.

A PRCs can be reclassified as a non-permit space only if the employer certifies in writing that all hazards in the space are eliminated. The hazards can be eliminated either from outside the space, by following a permit system, or by alternate entry protocol and entering the space to complete the necessary task(s). Such a space is considered reclassified as a non-permit space until such time as the hazard(s) are reintroduced into the space. It should also be noted that an employer may have non-permit confined spaces in their establishment that may have to be reclassified as PRCs if potential hazards are introduced into the space.

For more information, please refer to 29 CFR 1910.146 which can be found at www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html.